UNITED
NATIONS

CRC

Convention on the
Rights of the Child

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/15/Add.4
18 February 1993

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Third session

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child:
Russian Federation

1. The Committee considered the initial report of the Russian Federation (CRC/C/3/Add.5) at its 62nd, 63rd and 64th meetings (CRC/C/SR.62 to 64), held on 21 and 22 January 1993, and adopted* the following concluding observations:

A. Introduction

2. The Committee expresses satisfaction at the timely submission of the Russian Federation's initial report and for the frank, self-critical and comprehensive manner in which it was prepared. The Committee notes with appreciation the high-level representation sent to discuss the report, which serves as an indication of the importance attached by the Government of the Russian Federation to its obligations under the Convention, and for the open, comprehensive and constructive approach which characterized the dialogue with the delegation.

---

* At the 73rd meeting, held on 28 January 1993.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee is encouraged by the Government's willingness to define and appreciate the problems impeding the implementation of the rights provided for in the Convention and to search for adequate solutions to face them. In this regard, the Committee notes with satisfaction the progress being made in introducing legislative measures to improve the application of the Convention as well as the proposed establishment of juvenile and family courts. Equally, it recognizes the importance of the steps being taken to develop: the involvement of local and regional authorities in taking responsibility for implementing the rights of the child; the participation of non-governmental organizations in programmes to implement the rights of the child; the training of social and other workers dealing directly with children and family related problems; the awareness of the importance of the family and equal parental responsibilities; and the dissemination of information on the rights of the child.

4. The Committee also notes with satisfaction, in the light of article 4 of the Convention, the allocation of further resources for the benefit of children as a consequence of the economic effects of disarmament.

5. At a time of critical change in the State party and in view of the information provided by the delegation, the Committee recognizes the importance accorded by the State party to introducing positive changes for the benefit of children and to continuing to pursue policies that take into account the needs of children in a period of structural adjustment.

C. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation of the Convention

6. The Committee recognizes the difficulties facing the Russian Federation in this period of political transition in a climate of social change and economic crisis. Similarly, the Committee recognizes the legacy of certain attitudes which hamper the implementation of the rights of the child. These relate to, inter alia, the institutionalization of child care, the disabled and family responsibilities.

7. While recognizing the importance of the various reforms mentioned by the delegation, the Committee notes, however, that it is unable at this stage to assess the impact of the new and proposed legislative and other changes on the situation of children.

D. Principal subjects of concern

8. The Committee is concerned about the effects on children of the economic crisis. In this connection, the Committee is particularly concerned as to whether adequate and appropriate measures are being taken to protect children from being the victims of economic reform in the light of articles 3 and 4 of the Convention.

9. The Committee is concerned that society is not sufficiently sensitive to the needs and situation of children from particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, such as the disabled, in the light of article 2 of the Convention.

10. The Committee considers the serious problems of family life in the Russian Federation to be an area of priority concern. The Committee notes with particular concern the tendency towards the breakdown of family culture as regards abandoned children, abortion, the divorce rate, the number of adoptions, the number of children born out of wedlock and recovery of maintenance obligations.

11. Similarly, the Committee is concerned about the practice of the institutionalization in boarding schools of children who are deprived of a family environment, particularly in cases of abandonment or where children are orphaned.

12. The Committee expresses its concern as to the problems encountered in the immunization programme, the level of antenatal care, family planning programmes and the training of local community health workers. The Committee also expresses its concern at the frequent recourse to abortion as what appears to be a method of family planning.

13. As regards the implementation of article 28 of the Convention, the Committee expresses its concern as to the situation of the girl child in rural areas.

14. The Committee expresses its concern as to the compatibility of juvenile justice and penitentiary institutions with article 37 of the Convention and how the rights of the child to leisure and contacts with the family and the best interests of the child are protected in such situations. The Committee also expresses concern at the present organization of the system of administration of justice and its compatibility with article 37 of the Convention and other standards relating to juvenile justice.

15. The Committee notes with concern the increasing crime rate among children and the vulnerability of children to sexual abuse, drug abuse and alcoholism.

E. Suggestions and recommendations

16. The Committee recommends that in a period of structural adjustment it is particularly important to monitor regularly the effects of economic change on children. The Committee also emphasizes the appropriateness of identifying and using indicators to follow the Government's progress in the implementation of legislative and other measures for the rights of the child.

17. The Committee proposes that the Government consider the establishment of a National State Committee or any similar structure with the purpose of coordinating the implementation of the Convention and the monitoring thereof. The Committee recommends that support should be given to local and other non-governmental organizations for the mobilization of work on the rights of the child. The Committee also recommends the active participation of non-governmental organizations as well as children and youth groups in changing and influencing attitudes for the better implementation of the rights of the child.

18. The Committee considers that greater efforts should be made to provide family life education, to organize discussions on the role of the family in society and to develop awareness of the equal responsibilities of parents.

19. The Committee recommends that alternatives to institutionalization in boarding schools, such as foster care, should be actively sought. The Committee also recommends the further training of personnel in all institutions, such as social, legal or educational workers. An important part of such training should be to emphasize the promotion and protection of the child's sense of dignity and the issue of child neglect and maltreatment. Mechanisms to evaluate the ongoing training of personnel dealing with children are also required.

20. The Committee recommends that the primary health care system be improved regarding the effectiveness of, inter alia, antenatal care, health education, including sex education, family planning and immunization programmes. As regards problems relating specifically to the immunization programme, the Committee suggests that the Government should look to international cooperation for support in the procurement and manufacturing of vaccines.

21. The Committee is concerned about the occurrence of maltreatment and cruelty towards children in and outside the family and suggests that procedures and mechanisms be developed to deal with complaints by children of their maltreatment or of cruelty towards them.

22. Taking into account the positive steps being taken to revise the Penal Code and legislation in this field, the Committee recommends that the State party undertake comprehensive judicial reform as regards the administration of juvenile justice and that the international standards in this field, such as the "Beijing Rules", the "Riyadh Guidelines" and the Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, should serve as a guide in this revision. As regards alternative approaches to institutionalization, particular attention should be paid to rehabilitation measures, psychological recovery and social reintegration in line with article 39 of the Convention.

23. The Committee also suggests that part of the training of law enforcement officers, judges and other administration of justice officials be devoted to an understanding of international standards on juvenile justice.

24. The Committee emphasizes that more determined steps need to be taken to combat child prostitution; for example, the police forces should accord high priority to the investigation of such cases and the development of programmes to implement the provisions contained in article 39 of the Convention.